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REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated March 12, 2003. In that Action, the Examiner objected to the Specification and Claims 6, 8, 15 and 20. Claims 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claims 1, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Maness. Claims 3-11 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lehrer. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehrer in view of Hallstrom. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehrer. Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehrer in view of Maness. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehrer in view of Courtney. The Examiner also provisionally raised double patenting issues. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's objections and rejections and offers the foregoing amendments and following remarks in support thereof.

Claims 2-6, 8-11 and 18-19 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 7, 12-17 and 20 have been amended. Claims 21-31 have been added. No new matter has been inserted. Claims 1, 7, 12-17 and 20-31 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections.

Applicant has amended the Specification and Claims to overcome the Examiner's objections and Section 112 rejections.

All prior claims not involving an inflatable collar have been cancelled or amended to focus on Applicant's novel inflatable collar. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Lehrer reference is not relevant to the pending claims.

As to the Maness patent, the collar shown in Maness does not provide for the ends to be positioned in an overlapping relationship to each other in an inflated state as now claimed in

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Claim 1. It is also respectfully submitted that the dependent claims also provide further distinguishing features of Applicant's unique inflatable from the collar shown in Maness.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections based on Maness, as well as the other cited patents.

Applicant also respectfully believes that there is no "double patenting" issue given the current status of the pending claims in this application and the allowed claims of the copending application 10/047,682. Applicant will await the Examiner's confirmation of this point.

Applicant has completely responded to the Office Action dated March 12, 2003.

If there are any additional charges, including extension of time, please bill our Deposit Account No. 13-1130.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel S. Polley, Reg. No. 34,902
Malin, Haley & DiMaggio, P.A.
1936 South Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316
(954) 763-3303